

EAST ANGLIAN

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DAILY TIMES

Your daily Essex newspaper

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Town cruise to home victory

Reports start Back Page



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As bailiffs move in, travellers win site reprieve - until Friday

Full story: Page 7



Photo: PA

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Colchester

Minister in station visit

Page 4

West Bergholt

Man's child porn shame

Page 12

Fire control blunder

EAST ANGLIA: MPs brand £469m regional centres plan a 'complete failure'

By Paul Geater

fire control room and merger with Cambridgeshire.

The last government's proposal to replace 46 fire control rooms with nine regional centres came under fire from the House of Commons' influential Public Accounts Committee.

It said the FiReControl plan, launched by the previous Labour Government, was one of the worst cases of project failure it had seen for

years and was "flawed from the outset". The project was launched in 2004 but the coalition Government scrapped it last year after a series of expensive delays.

The committee said in its report that a minimum of £469million had been wasted, with eight of the purpose-built new centres remaining empty at a cost to the taxpayer of £4m a month to maintain.

The report said: "The committee considers this to be an extraordinary failure of leadership. Yet no individuals have been held accountable for the failure and waste associated with this project."

The contract was poorly designed and the department awarded computer work to a firm with no direct

Turn to Page 2

THE attempt to set up a series of regional fire control centres across Britain has been attacked as a "complete failure" by MPs.

The bid cost nearly half a billion pounds - and indirectly led to next month's closure of Suffolk's

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NEWS



BATTLE LINE: The children of Dale Farm travellers site hold pictures of themselves at the gate to the illegal site in Cray's Hill, Essex. Right, bailiff Bryan Lecoche appeals for the travellers and their supporters to leave the camp yesterday

Photos: PA

Traveller evictions halted by legal bid

DALE FARM: Hearing on Friday

By Press Association reporters

RESIDENTS of the UK's biggest illegal travellers' site last night won a last-minute injunction temporarily halting moves to evict them from their homes.

About 200 protesters barricaded themselves inside Dale Farm in Basildon, Essex, as the local council prepared to remove them forcibly from the former scrapyard.

Bailiffs gave residents a final chance to leave voluntarily yesterday before they began the process of ejecting them from the site.

But just before 5pm a judge at London's High Court granted an order stopping the local authority from clearing caravans and cars until a further legal hearing on Friday.

Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart said there was a realistic fear that the measures being taken by Basildon Council might go further than the terms of the enforcement notices.

The order also prevents the local authority from cutting off utilities like electricity unless they pose a danger.

But the judge said the residents had to take reasonable steps to permit council officials on site to discuss arrangements with individuals, to discourage further protests and to arrange the dismantling of barricades.

News of the injunction provoked cheers inside the site and travellers taunted bailiffs by singing: "We're not going to go."

Resident Mary Slattery said: "We are delighted. Every day is a bonus. We've got one last chance and we're not going to give up - this gives us so much hope."

Basildon Council leader Tony Ball said he was "extremely disappointed and frustrated" by the judge's decision.

"I am absolutely clear that on this issue, on Friday, the court will find in the council's favour and that the site clearance will be able to continue," he said.

"But until then, as always, this council will comply with the law and we will comply with the judgment that has been put before us."

A separate legal challenge to the eviction, brought in the Appeal Court by 72-year-old traveller Mary Flynn on the grounds of her poor health, failed yesterday.

After a day of mounting tensions between officials and the residents, bailiffs walked to Dale Farm's main gate just before 3pm and issued a final warning.

Bryan Lecoche, from bailiffs Constant and Company, told the demonstrators: "I'm concerned for your wellbeing and the wellbeing of the council's agents who have been instructed to restore the land."

"In the interests of health and safety, is there anything I can say or do that will persuade you to remove yourselves in an orderly manner?"

But after being met only by shouts of "scum", Mr Lecoche led his men back to their nearby compound.

Editorial comment, Page 18

BRIEFING

Motor plant's big jobs boost

CAR giant Jaguar Land Rover delivered a huge boost to the motor industry yesterday by announcing plans to invest £355million to build low-emission engines, potentially creating thousands of new jobs.

The new facility will be based at a business park near Wolverhampton in the Midlands, creating 750 direct jobs, and many more in the supply chain, with work due to start early next year.

The government, business and union leaders warmly welcomed the news, which marked a dramatic turnaround in the Indian-owned luxury carmaker's fortunes in recent years.

Milly '£2m payout'

The family of murdered schoolgirl Milly Dowler are close to agreeing a huge settlement with News International over the hacking of their daughter's phone.

It is understood the Dowler family is likely to receive about £2million from the publisher of the now-defunct News of the World, with £1m being donated to charity. News International confirmed last night it is in "advanced negotiations".

The voicemail of Milly, pictured, was accessed on behalf of the News of the World while she was missing, and messages were deleted to make room for more recordings. This gave the family false hope that she was still alive.



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